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NEGLECTED THINGS;

OR,

Words of Warning

ON THE

NEGLECT OF COMMON CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

BY THE

REV. E. SHELTON.



"BE DILIGENT THAT YE MAY BE FOUND OF HIM
IN PEACE."—ST. PETER.

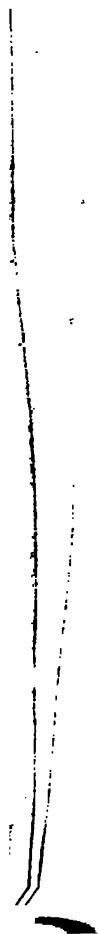
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P R E F A C E.

THE following chapters were originally composed for the *Christian Miscellany*, and appeared in successive numbers of that valuable periodical.

From a variety of sources, inclusive of his *fathers* and *brethren* in the ministry, as well as *other friends*, the writer received notes of approbation, assuring him that "NEGLECTED THINGS" were not only read with *pleasure*, but with *profit* also.

It is moreover just to state that the *kind requests* of friends, with a *desire to do good*, and not a *love of authorship*, gave birth to the volume you now hold in your hand.

We insert the following :—

"Dear Mr. Shelton,"

"I am glad that you are going to publish in a separate form, your papers on "*Neglected Things*." To peruse those papers, and carry them through the press in the *Christian Miscellany*, was to myself a most agreeable occupation, because every one of them was likely to be *useful*. For this alone we wish to preach and write. May God bestow his blessing on your labour."

"I am, most truly yours,"

"W. H. RULE, D.D."

PREFACE.

It is thought to be a very appropriate presentation volume for parents and others, especially in those cases where there is evidence of spiritual declension. It will convey a word of warning in a manner that will be unlikely to defeat its own object.

Reviewers and critics—Be kind enough to observe that we are not regardless either of your smile or frown, your gracious approval or your withering anathema. We crave your attention to the fact that we write for *usefulness*.

Christians—We court your candid perusal, and that in the spirit of our kind and christian editor's prayer:—"May God bestow his blessing on your labour."

THE AUTHOR.

Madeley,
June 10th, 1856.

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Introductory.

"I have a few things against thee."—Rev. ii. 14.

"WERE you not cautioned to take your life-belts out with you?"

"Yes; but as it did not blow so very hard when we started, we thought we could do without them."

The above question was put by a juryman at a coroner's inquest, which was held over the bodies of three poor fishermen that had been recovered from a watery grave. The answer was supplied by a witness, who was a survivor. A life-boat had left the shore at L——, about noon, one day last autumn, manned by a crew of eleven, all buoyant with the hope that their craft, by this trial-trip, would prove its superiority, and would in future enable them to save the lives of any unfortunate mariners who

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might require their aid. Little did they dream that what was to be the means of saving others, would so soon be the instrument of their own destruction. After having been out rather more than an hour, and when dashing through the breakers at a distance of three miles from the shore, the boat leaned over, owing to the quantity of sail she carried, and was upset. Three out of the eleven were all who reached their homes again alive. Eight perished, leaving as many widows, and twenty-six fatherless children. Those bereaved ones we visited in their affliction, and the scenes we met with were beyond description: and many a time did we wish that the poor fellows had not neglected to take their life-belts; but for that case of neglect, all might have been saved.

But it is not to dwell on this incident that mention is here made of it: we desire the more strongly to direct the attention of the reader to a general subject, by describing an individual case bearing thereon.

How many of the ills of life are attributable to the same cause,—*neglect!* The world abounds

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with neglects and neglectors. With all our enterprise and industry, our forethought and perseverance, we see around us many, very many, evils that might have been avoided, were mankind more attentive to their duty, and used in all things a proper degree of precaution. How many of those sad calamities which occur by sea and by land, in every vocation, and in every corner of our country, which darken our dwelling-places, which in some instances shock the feelings of a whole community, would be averted, were we less neglectful! A chapter on the number and consequences of the plain palpable neglects which are observable in society from time to time, would be a very painful, and an equally instructive one.

Be it ours for a moment to look into the church of God, and leave the outer world to others. Here we see the same thing in operation, while the results are infinitely more alarming.

There is at this moment, as if by universal consent, a fearful feeling of deadness pervading the church, by which her energies are crippled,

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her usefulness curtailed, and her glory dimmed. Is there not a cause? Is not that cause *neglect*? He who ever "walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks," whose "eyes are as a flame of fire," and "out of whose mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword," hath "a few things against us." We would not ignore the energies and activities of the present day, as displayed in our glorious Missionary institutions, both for the home and foreign population, which are not to be equalled by those of any former period. These, all these, we rejoice over; but there is, notwithstanding, a failure somewhere. Our Protestant churches are not so united, so vigorous, and so prosperous as they ought to be. All see it, many deplore it, and multitudes weep and pray over it, and hope for better days. Again we ask, is there not a cause? And is not that cause a gross and sinful neglect of many plain and imperative duties? We think so, and proceed to set it forth, praying that its removal may speedily be accomplished, and our Zion arise and shine!

The Bible.*

“As dew, and rain, and light, and air,
From Heaven the Bible came,
The waste of nature to repair,
Kindle a sacred flame;—
A flame to purify the earth,
Exalt her sons on high,
And train them for their second birth—
A birth beyond the sky.”

“Precious treasure.” It is God’s gift to a lost race; man’s guide from this world to a better. It is the book of books. It has been said “that the Bible is as much greater than all other books, as its Author is greater than all other authors.” If this be so, how immeasurably superior must it be to all other books whatsoever! They may be pleasing in their style, profitable, instructive, and thrilling in their

* “Bible” comes from a Greek word signifying the kind of bark of which books were long ago made. Book is originally the same as beech; as formerly, in Denmark and other northern countries, books were formed of thin slices of the beech tree rudely tied together.

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contents; may have engaged the attention of the mightiest intellects, and that not for days or weeks, but for years; may have been translated into all the living languages, and may be read by millions of people with avidity; but the Bible will always be amongst other books what the lion is amongst the beasts of the forest,—their King; or what the sun is amongst the heavenly bodies,—the brightest of the whole; and when it rises, all the others must disappear. Calvin says, “Read Demosthenes or Cicero, read Plato or Aristotle, or any other of that class, you will, I grant, feel wonderfully allured, pleased, moved, enchanted; but turn from them to the reading of the sacred volume, and, whether you will or not, it will so affect you, so pierce your heart, so win its way into your very marrow, that, compared with the effect so produced, the sensation created by the perusal of poets and orators will almost disappear.” God is its Author: in it “we think we have eternal life,” and it testifies of Christ. Its Divine Authorship, its precious contents, and its glorious effects, all speak to its incal-

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culable worth, and reiterate the Divine injunction, "Search the Scriptures."

The Bible should be read not only in all the pulpits of our land, but in every Christian house, and in every Christian's closet. It should be read diligently, systematically, and prayerfully; should be read in order to direct our erring footsteps, and guide us into the way of truth; so read, as that we are by it "made wise unto salvation;" and so read as that we are led to the cordial belief of all its glorious truths, the rich enjoyment of all its precious promises, and careful obedience to all its important precepts. Is it so read? Many read it in the family and in the closet; but is it with painstaking, persevering purpose to understand it and practice it? We are now in the habit of reading short things, and pretty things, and witty things; and the Bible, in too many instances, is read as carelessly as the ephemeral productions which float like gossamer around us on a summer's eve, and as soon to be forgotten. Many read it without anything like system, opening up any portion which may present itself, and thus

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neglect a great deal of God's revealed will. Can we understand any branch of science without application and without plan? We think not. Nor can the sublime subjects contained in God's most holy word be comprehended by frivolous readers. Such are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They do not go to God's word hungry, to be fed; ignorant, to be made wise unto salvation; but, conscious of an obligation, to discharge it as easily as possible. Many go to the Bible for its history, or its poetry, or its imagery, or its eloquence; instead of going, as lost sinners, to be instructed in the way of life, and to be refreshed by its pure and lucid streams of water of life. If the Bible be read undevotionally and mechanically, we shall fail to understand it. Let a man of uncultivated taste be introduced into a room hung with the most rich and rare pictures, the first impression will be one of pleasure and surprise; but hurrying from one to another, he soon performs the circuit of the room, and turns away, feeling satisfied, but having gained little. Now,

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introduce an artist, whose perceptions have been sharpened by experience and practice ; he fixes his keen eye upon some masterpiece, and there he hangs with wonder or admiration, and lost to all that is passing around him. The Scriptures are a beautiful picture-gallery, containing the most striking pictures of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, of grace and glory ; but without spiritual eyesight, we shall not perceive their beauties, nor reap the pleasures they are intended to confer, and that gift is to be obtained by prayer. "Then opened He their understanding, to understand the Scriptures." Our fear is this, that while in no age of the world have there been greater facilities for reading and understanding, as well as possessing the word of God, in no age have there been greater temptations, and greater danger of neglecting its diligent and prayerful perusal. In vain do we print Bibles, and circulate them far and wide : except "we search the oracles Divine, till every heartfelt word is ours," our piety will be dwarfish and unstable ; we shall be disqualified to meet the enemies in the gate.

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me, Misse, to come across de hills; and now me come, me beg Misse teach me." Mrs. J., still thinking her too old to learn, endeavoured to turn her from her purpose. The aged suppliant replied, "Yes, Misse, me know me be very old, and (lifting her hand to her head) "me head be bery tick; but den me ask de Great Massa to teach me, and me know he can." Mrs. J. then asked her why she was so anxious to be taught; to which the aged Negress replied, "Misse, what make me wish is, dat when me be sick, and ab de fever, and me no able to come to de prayer-house, Massa Missionary ab plenty to do, he no able to come to see me ebry day, and den me tink me no able to go; and den me can take up de great Word, and read de promises, and all about Massa Jesus. You know, Misse, it be light to de paff, and lanthorn to de feet, and it comfort me when me die." This last appeal was irresistible, and a day was fixed for commencing to instruct this anxious inquirer. The poor old slave, having been provided with a book, came accordingly at the time appointed. Mrs. J. found her

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scholar unable to read a single letter; but by perseverance, she was in a short time enabled to put letters together, so as to be able to spell a short word; and when, on one occasion, she had deciphered the word LORD, her demonstration of joy was indescribable, and she said, "Misse, dat be de Great Massa's name?" Mrs. J. nodding assent, she let her book fall, and, clasping her hands together, and raising them towards heaven, exclaimed, "O me Great Massa, me able to spell dy great name;" and then attempting to spell it again, as if to be quite certain that she could do so, she repeated a second time the letters LORD; and, looking at her instructress for her approval, asked, "Misse, dat be right?" On acquiescence being given, she added, "Tank de Great Massa for teaching me read de great Word;" at the same time prayed most earnestly that God would bless Massa Missionary and Misse, and de good land (meaning England). The aged scholar continued for some time in a strain of joy and exultation, the tears rolling down her black cheeks, until the ground on which she stood

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was bedewed with them. She continued to attend, though at the expense to herself of great bodily exhaustion, having to travel alone, and each time four or five miles under a scorching sun.

He who had inspired her with a desire to read His sacred word, enabled her to overcome every obstacle, and to make such progress, that before Mrs. J. left the island, she could read the New Testament tolerably well, and it became her guide and companion.

The Week-Evening Service.

"I have seen Thee in Thy works, sought Thee in Thy providences, but I have found Thee in THY HOUSE."

LORD BACON.

WITHOUT the most remote wish to disparage the high and holy services of the Sabbath of the Lord of Hosts, we name the "week-evening service," as amongst the most valuable means of grace with which we are favoured. By way of example, take a case of no infrequent occurrence. You are threading your own way through the crowded streets of one of our great hives of industry, or moving along through the fashionable promenades of one of our great resorts of fashion where every human being you meet seems intent on making money, or taking pleasure, where the din, and clatter, and glare of this world everywhere surround, and where

"The things unknown to feeble sense,
Unseen by reason's glimmering ray,"

THE WEEK-EVENING SERVICE.

are, although more solid and enduring, altogether shut out from your view. It is evening. Hurrying on amidst the display of princely shops, and brilliant equipages, amid care-worn or gaily equipped pedestrians, or both, and wondering whither all are going, and what the object of their various pursuits, your eye is attracted by a building more modest than its neighbours, and whose half-opened doors seem to pour forth a silent entreaty to the pious and the prayerful, as well as the gay and thoughtless, to enter and worship.

On entering, having taken your seat, and sought that "preparation of the heart," which, as well as the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord, "your eye is directed to the pulpit, in which is the servant of the Lord Most High, who has come fresh from "the secret place," with holy unction, to lead the devotions of the faithful, and to deliver the message of his Master. On looking round upon the congregation, it is found to consist chiefly of the members of the church. Here is a pious patriarch,

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whose countenance beaming with benevolence, and whose eye glistening with delight from beneath a fleece of whitened locks, bespeak him a happy Christian. Whoever may be absent from the sanctuary, he is there; always there: at least absence is the rare exception; while to be present, with him, is the constant and (except in some extraordinary circumstances) unvarying rule. In a contiguous pew is a pious lady who is just returned from some walk of mercy, (either to visit a sick member of the church, or collect for some benevolent "scheme" of the church,) and of whom you often hear it said, "She is sure to be there." Of such is that portion of the congregation composed which occupies the more comfortable pew, while the horny-handed artisan from the spindle or the forge, in plain attire, yet still one of Heaven's royal family, together with the meanly clad but pious woman, who is always to be found in the company of Christ, and in the congregation of the saints, when others have despised Him, occupy the free sittings appropriated to the poor. Hark! the man of God

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announces the hymn, and rehearses the first lines,—

“Lord, how delightful 'tis to see
A whole assembly worship Thee!”

Praise commences, and at once you feel, with Peter on the Mount, when his transfigured Master, attended by Moses and Elias, stood forth in the unutterable glory of the Divine nature, and exclaimed, “Lord, it is good for us to be here;” and as the service proceeds, this feeling deepens. The prayer is simple, but devout and earnest, while petition after petition climbs the ladder Jacob saw. Like the Patriarch, you exclaim, “How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” The text is announced: the subject of discourse is plain and simple. In its treatment there is not the same elaboration as in a Sunday sermon, nor is it delivered with the same eloquence and grace; but there is ease combined with simplicity; there is, moreover, an adaptation and point which tell upon the auditory, and which not unfrequently lead the week-night worshipper

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to express a wish that his Minister would always preach in the same style. The sermon having closed, the voice of praise again ascends: it may be in the following language,—

“ How pleasant and sweet, in His name when we meet,
Is His fruit to our spiritual taste !
We are banqueting here, on angelical cheer,
And the joys that eternally last.”

The service closes ; and as you remingle with the money-making or pleasure-seeking crowd, and contrast the peaceful sanctuary with the restless ocean without, you think, “ I would rather be a door-keeper in Thy house than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” “ One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

There is one feature in the service we have just delineated, which detracts from the pleasure derived from the whole ; namely, the paucity of the number of worshippers. In the interior of that deep gallery which, on the evening of the Lord’s day, and when some popular minister officiates, is well filled, now in all its ample

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range there is not one solitary worshipper. No, not one! Where are they who throng it on popular occasions? Echo answers, "Where?" O! could we follow them through all the lanes of life in which they tread, how few should we find thinking of the hour of prayer! Nor is the higher part of the edifice alone neglected: there are those tiers of well-constructed pews, fitted up with every accommodation, and which on Sundays are filled with families, now almost altogether without an occupant. The seats appropriated to the humble poor can boast the greatest number of occupants; (although these are far from full;) and thus, on such occasions, "the gospel is preached to the poor" indeed, but to them only in small numbers.

With those persons who boldly aver their belief in the non-importance of the week-evening service, we have nothing now to do, but rather with those who (whatever their conduct in this matter may be) will admit, when hard pushed, that the service in question is at once a privilege and a duty. The evil of which we complain is patent to the world; for it is wide-

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spread. Go amongst the rude operatives of Lancashire, or the field-labourers of Berks ; go north or south of the Tweed ; the plague-spot marks every section of the church of Christ. We, with the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists, all suffer from this blight ; it is everywhere. This neglect is the more painfully distressing when placed side by side with the fact, that the lecture-room (to say nothing of the theatre, the opera-house, and other places of amusement) is crowded, night after night. And whether the subject be astronomy or geography, geology, or even "biology," the lecturer attracts a multitude around him, and a multitude of professing Christians. It not unfrequently happens that the Minister of Christ is preaching to an all but empty chapel "the unsearchable riches of Christ ; while the infinitely less important themes of the lecture-room are listened to by admiring multitudes, and received with deafening applause. Do we inquire into the causes of this lamentable neglect of Christian worship, we find them to be worldly-mindedness, indif-

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ference, a low estimate of the house of God, covetousness, needless self-indulgence; and last, though not least, the example of others. Parents neglect the house of God, and their children do the same. Leaders are not seen there, and their members lose their sense of its importance. Masters and the principals of large establishments habitually absent themselves, and do not make the way plain for their dependents; and thus the whole body of the people feels the force of evil example, and is influenced by it. The results of this flagrant abuse of the ordinances of the Lord's house are painful to contemplate. The Minister is distressed and discouraged; the faithful few are grieved; the work of God is impeded; the zeal, and usefulness, and glory of Zion are lessened; God is dishonoured. Men forget the solemn charge of Malachi; "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts . . . Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein

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have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

But, to ease your conscience, you plead necessity arising from domestic arrangements and the duties of the several vocations of life. We are not unwilling to give this plea all the consideration it merits; but we ask, if your oxen, your land, and your wife prevent you from attending the house of God, why do they not interfere with the lecture-room, or the evening party? If necessity thins our churches and chapels, how comes it to pass that the same necessity does not empty the lecture-room, the theatre, and the opera-house? Surely this is a vain subterfuge. Let those whom it concerns answer this question, and answer it in the light of life's closing scene. Will you when "the evil days come," the days when "the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of

The Prayer-Meeting.

"When a Prayer-Meeting is below freezing-point, it is a fatal indication."

THE social means of grace indicated by the well-known title of this article is no modern innovation, but a very ancient and God-honoured service. "For all these things will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do them for them," is an enunciation, not only applicable to individuals, but also to the church of the living God, and one which she has always acknowledged in her best and happiest days, as well as in the midst of storm and tempest. "Wheresoever,"—in the stately cathedral, or the capacious chapel, or the humble vestry; in the shieling of the Highlander, or the kloff of the Kaffir, or the wigwam of the Indian, or the hut of the New-Zealander,—"wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My name;" not merely where Solomon marshals the

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

“elders of Israel,” and the “heads of the tribes,” with “the chief of the fathers,” together with all “the men of Israel;” but also where no national event is to be celebrated, and when the officers and symbols of a nation’s glory are absent, even in the lowly cottage of the humble villager, with its rude stools, and broken chairs, and well-worn hymn-book, and its “two or three” poor fishermen, or its two or three poor labourers, who hymn the praises of heaven’s King to the notes of “Job,” or “New Sabbath,”—“there am I;” —I, “by whom all things were created, visible and invisible,” “I, who was dead, and am alive again.” I, who am set down at the right hand of my Father, “from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.” I, who visited Moses in the bush, and the Hebrew children in the furnace, and John in the isle of Patmos,—“there am I;” whoever is absent, “there am I.” That member of the church who is a partner in a large mercantile firm may not leave his counting-house ; nor his brother, who is a manufacturer, his mill ; nor Matthew,

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“a custom-house officer,” his receipt of custom ; nor their wives and daughters the comforts of the drawing-room ; but “there am I.”

Who has not, that has frequented this hallowed means of grace, met the Saviour “in the midst ?” Yes, it is a place for intercourse with the “Friend of sinners.” Here the mourner in Zion receives “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

“The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.”

And while the sorrows of the church are relieved, and the wounds of the church are healed, in the prayer-meeting ; here also her graces are polished and strengthened : and while the knees of her Pauls are bowed unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, she is “strengthened with might by His Spirit,” and comprehends “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” and knows “what is the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” and thus receives “all

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

the fulness of God." God has always honoured the prayer-meeting with His presence, and vouchsafed His blessing.

When Solomon held a prayer-meeting, at the dedication of the temple, "the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the Priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house." When the disciples held a prayer-meeting in Mary's house, about Peter, the two soldiers were thrown off their guard, the two chains by which he was bound were snapped asunder, and the wicked Herod was disappointed of his prey: while the disciples were rejoiced by Peter's appearance amongst them; for the Lord, in answer to prayer, had sent an angel by whom his deliverance was effected. And our modern prayer-meeting, with its "two or three" attendants, although unmarked by the eye of ambition, unheralded by the breath of applause, and unrecorded by the hand of any chronicler, is nevertheless marked by the eye

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of an approving God, applauded by the first-born sons of light, and will be remembered in that day when secrets shall be revealed.

Amongst the number of "neglected things," the prayer-meeting holds a conspicuous place. This neglect is one of the alarming "signs of the times," and one of the causes of the church's weakness. Our Thomases are not present when Jesus comes. Perhaps, dear reader, like Thomas, you have not been present at those precious means where Christ had promised to be present, and was present. "Well, what if he was not? It was a little matter, very little, just staying away from the prayer-meeting." Ah! my brother, it was large enough to be noticed by the omniscient eye, to be marked by the Divine pen. The church in all ages since has read it. The world, far and wide, has known it. Coming generations, even to the end of time, will learn it. I do not know but in heaven they will still wonder at that strange line, 'Thomas was not with them when Jesus came.' Dost thou consider who notes thy absence from the prayer-meeting? Thinkest

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thou, when the books are opened, there will be no record concerning thee?

“*Why* was not Thomas there? Doubtless, there was a reason. Perhaps his business was urgent. He must make sale of those fish; or, may be, his net was broken, and must be mended. Perhaps he was invited to meet some friends; and must prayer interfere with a social visit? Or, perhaps, there was some special attraction that night in Jerusalem; a concert of music, it may be, or a lecture from some famous Rabbi; and must these be forgotten just for the church prayer-meeting? Or, perhaps it rained, or, at least, it was cloudy, or somewhat cold; or, I do not know what was the reason. *This I know*, ‘Thomas was not with them when Jesus came.’ Christian professor! thou dost not know what kept Thomas from the prayer-meeting; but what is it that so often keeps thee? Is it a good reason? Will it bear scrutiny now? Will it appear valid from thy bed of death? Will it stand the ordeal of the judgment?”*

* “Christian Treasury.”

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The prayer-meeting has been designated, not improperly, the "thermometer of the church." "The true thermometer of a church to indicate its spiritual temperature, is the weekly gathering around the mercy-seat. A cold prayer-meeting makes a cold church. It is at once the cause and the effect of spiritual declension. If the place of prayer is well nigh deserted; if the few who are present bodily, seem absent in spirit; if the prayers offered are languid, without point, and without unction, then the Pastor has abundant cause for heart-heaviness and tears. Sermons delivered to such a people are like discourses preached in in one of the ruined temples of Luxor, with the shrivelled dead embalmed around, and grim heads of stone, looking down from every capital. His hands hang down, and his spirits faint.

"And as a church has no surer symptoms of decay than a decaying prayer-meeting, so nothing feels the approach of a revival so palpably as the place of prayer. A revival begins there commonly. The deserted seats are filled.

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Those who could not leave their business, now find but little difficulty in closing the doors of their shops or their counting-rooms. The absent Thomases are once more with the disciples, and wonder to find their Saviour there too, speaking 'Peace be unto you.' Those who seldom prayed are now ready to pour out their souls in supplication. The gift of tongues has descended. The sluggish are mounting up with "wings as eagles." A latent power is developed in the church, which astounds both Pastor and people."†

We put in a plea for this much-dishonoured means of grace. We ask that its claims may be duly considered, duly admitted, and acknowledged. We pray that the deplorable Laodicean results of the neglect of it may be properly weighed, and the certain speedy revival of gracious feeling consequent upon its observance may have the attention it claims. We implore the *wealthy*, the *talented*, and the *influential* members of the church to attest their love to Christ, to the church, and to a ruined world, by ral-

†"Western Christian Advocate."

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lying around the weekly prayer-meeting. Then shall “Zion, the city of our solemnities, Jerusalem, be a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby.”

“Come in Thy pleading Spirit down,
To us who for Thy coming stay;
Of all Thy gifts we ask but one,
We ask the constant power to pray.
Indulge us, Lord, in this request,
Thou canst not then deny the rest.”

The Sabbath.

"The Sabbath upon earth is a fragment of heaven set like a gem in the brow of the world. It is, as it were, an island struck off from the continent of eternity, and cast down into the roaring torrents of human life; standing upon which we can see the sunshine of the better land, and hear the chimes of its jubilee."—VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

"REMEMBER the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy." You may forget it amid the hurry, and strife, and turmoil of life. Like a jewel cast into the dirt, you may trample it beneath your foot as a base and worthless thing, and cease to remember that it is of infinitely greater value than the celebrated *Koh-i-noor*, that gem of the Great Exhibition. Forgetfulness may erase the impression of its authority from your memory; example may obliterate its sacredness from before your eyes; while covetousness may discontinue its regard in your hearts. True, this holy institution has of late been brought very prominently before the public

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eye, and has engaged the public mind in no small degree. Divines and operatives, working ministers and working men, have joined hands, and hearts, and tongues, and pens in its defence. From the pulpit, the press, and the platform have been poured forth streams of eloquence, of argument and persuasion, of

“Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,” while our gracious Queen has patronised the movement by adopting “The Pearl of Days.” Yet, nevertheless, this “Queen of Days,” as Augustin calls it, may be forgotten. Men may forget its Divine authority. It was in the garden, man’s primitive home, after His omnific working in six successive days, that God appointed this holy day. Moses testifies that “on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which God created and made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” Whence it appears that God blessed it, sanctified it, and *Himself* observed it. The Sabbath, therefore, is the most ancient of all God’s ordinances. It is clothed in

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the hoary veil of antiquity. It went forth in the morning of the creation with God's blessing deeply and broadly imprinted upon it to bless man, and has been travelling through the earth ever since for the healing of the nations. It was to be seen in paradise, in the ark, in the wilderness, in Jerusalem. Hesiod, Homer, Porphyry, Eusebius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and a host of others, bear witness to its general observance. Nor did Christ abolish it, but renewed its youth, and sent it forth on its high commission to bless mankind,

“ While stars maintain their stations,
And moons renew their youth.”

Its beneficial design may be forgotten. “The Sabbath was made for man,” and is appropriately designated “the workman's jubilee, the slave's release, the shield of servitude, the antidote of weariness, the suspension of the curse.” Men may forget “how it smooths the brow of care; how it brightens the countenance of gloom; how it braces the limbs of labour; how it raises the drooping spirits of despair; how it pours some drops of sweetness in the

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bitterest lot, and sheds some gleams of sunshine athwart the saddest heart ;" how it raises man, morally and spiritually ; how, after the pressure of six days' toil and anxiety, it walks forth clad with authority, and irradiated with joy, to silence the hum of business, to close the gates of trade and commerce, to hush the troubled ocean of every-day life into calm ; and, having cast a veil of sanctity over all the works of God and man, to throw open the gates of thousands and thousands of temples, and lead mankind into the presence of their Maker, that it may proclaim the voice of the law, exhibit the attractions of the Cross of peace, issue an invitation to repentance, faith, and holiness ; read the seven epistles, blow the seven trumpets, break the seven seals ; and then, opening a " door in heaven, point the worshipping multitude on earth to the adoring multitude before the throne in yonder glorious and eternal world :

" One day amidst the place
Where Thou, my Lord, hast been,"
Is sweeter than ten thousand days
Of pleasurable sin."

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We have said that it *may be*, and we now add it *is* forgotten. Think of its prohibition of work : "In it thou shalt not do any work." This law is so plain that a child may understand it. You may not do any work, or delegate it to be done by others. There must be rest in the city, and rest in the village ; rest in the palace, and rest in the cottage ; for it is the day of rest. With the exception of works of mercy, necessity, and religion, there is to be a universal cessation of labour : for "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." Let us apply the law to the state of things as they actually exist around us. Buying and selling in half-opened shops articles of food and clothing, are not works either of mercy, necessity, or religion, and are therefore a violation of the fourth commandment. Writing letters of business, employing public bakers, paying visits to friends by rail or otherwise, are not works of mercy, necessity, or religion, and are therefore violations of the fourth commandment. Reading newspapers or works of fiction, indulging in conversation not directly or indirectly spiritual,

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cherishing worldly thoughts, wishes, calculations, and projects, are not works of mercy, necessity, or religion, and are therefore to be regarded as plain violations of the fourth commandment.

To show that it is forgotten, we point to its requirement to be "sanctified," by an attendance upon the public worship of God. Look at our railways and rivers. Think of the thousands and tens of thousands who are allured from their homes under the specious pretence of studying nature, and of breathing pure air in the country and at the sea-side. Go into our watering-places on the morning of the Sabbath, after a monster train has arrived, and see how the Sabbath-breaking multitude "brace their limbs," and "improve their minds." Here a party plunge into the water, perhaps never more to rise; there, a number repair to the bar of a public house, and return intoxicated to their homes; while others saunter away their time on the beach, or annoy the peaceful and pious inhabitants by freaks and follies; giving *the whole scene* rather the appearance of a

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country fair, or a village wake, than of the peaceful Sabbath of the Lord of Hosts.

To prove that it is forgotten, we may appeal to the census-returns. On the morning of the census-Sunday, out of a population of eighteen millions, thirteen millions entered no place of worship; and in the afternoon and evening, fourteen millions were not found in the house of God. Probably not less than nine millions (half the population of Britain) neglected to sanctify the Sabbath by worshipping God in His sanctuary on that and on every Sunday since. Surely the census-Sunday calls with no feeble voice upon the nine millions of British Sabbath-breakers to "remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy." Listen to its voice, and be admonished. "When France abolished the Sabbath, she declared, There is no God but reason, and no hereafter;" and you might have read upon tombstones erected at that period,

"Death is an eternal Sleep!"

The same sad symbols of infidelity would disfigure the graveyards of Britain, if her population neglected the Sabbath to the same extent.

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Do we ask for motives to Sabbath observance? They rush upon us in countless numbers, and force conviction upon every mind not wholly abandoned to blindness and to crime. Here are a few. The celebrated Matthew Henry says of Sabbath neglect: "It is as if a Prince should invite you into his company, offer to entertain you with the most pleasing and edifying discourse, and appoint a time and a place for the interview, and you should go and turn your back upon him to talk to some idle beggar or buffoon at the door: would it not justly be construed into an unreasonable affront? Yet you do ten thousand times worse, when you spend that day in common conversation and business which God has appointed for audience with Himself." Lord Chief Justice Hale says, on Sabbath observance: "I have found by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing of the Lord's day has ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week thus begun has been blessed and prosperous to me."

The doctrine of rewards and punishments is

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not always clear in the common course of events around us; but to the observant eye, the hand of Providence is always inscribing upon the affairs of men a marked approval of Sabbath observance, and disapproval of Sabbath neglect.

The Pilgrim Fathers had arrived within ten minutes' sail (if wind and tide had favoured them) of the place where they were to abide all the rest of their pilgrimage, but it was the Lord's day; and although the island was desolate, frost-bound, habitationless, and overhead a snowy sky, or, what was worse, a freezing sleet, yet they anchored, and dedicated the hours of that day to the worship of God. Dr. Cheever remarks: "That day, kept for God on that island, has sent down a blessing for all the posterity of the pilgrims." Look at that picture, and then look on this.

One Sabbath afternoon, in harvest, a Swiss farmer, having corn in the field, and observing the storm gathering, said to his men, "If you will house a thousand sheaves before it rains, you shall be rewarded. An aged grandmother,

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overhearing the remark, came forward, and said, "John, John, as far as I can remember, I have never known a single ear housed on the Sabbath; and yet we have been loaded with blessings. John, do not violate the rest of this holy day, I beseech thee." Grandmother, every thing must have a beginning: there is no evil in this; it is quite indifferent to God. He will be as much pleased to see the grain housed as exposed to the rain." "John, John, within doors and without doors all things are the Lord's; and thou knowest not *what may happen this evening*; but thou knowest I am thy grandmother. I entreat thee, for the love of God's sake, not to work to-day. I had rather eat no corn for a whole year." "Grandmother, doing a thing once is not a habit." "But, John, God's commandments are always the same; and what shall it profit thee to gather thy corn and lose thy soul?" "Don't be uneasy about that," he said; "and now, lads, let us go to work." "John, John," cried the old woman, for the last time; and while she *wept and prayed* the corn was housed. John

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entered the house, and said, "Now, grandmother, *all is secure* : let the tempests roar and the elements rage." "Yes, John, but above thy roof spreads the Lord's roof." A tremendous clap of thunder was heard, and another, and another : all were panic-struck : the barn was in flames : they saw the sheaves burning ; *all were cursed*. The old woman alone was calm.

"LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US, AND INCLINE OUR HEARTS TO KEEP THIS LAW."

The Class-Meeting.

"WISE Solomon observes it out of his deep experience, for a vanity under the sun, that 'there is one alone, and there is not a second.' And that 'two are better than one, because they have a reward for their labour.' Single endeavours seldom prosper; many hands make the work both quick and sure."—BISHOP HALL.

"God never made an independent man :
'Twould jar the concord of the general plan."

GRAINGER.

"WHAT a beautiful object ! its leaves are all a silvery white," exclaimed a traveller in a far-distant land, as he gazed upon the spreading branches of a tree that was indigenous to the soil. "White, did you say ?" inquired a friend by whom he was accompanied, with some degree of surprise : "surely it is a slight mistake ; for they appear to me to be all green." "Nay, verily, they are white," reiterated the former ; while at the same time he assured himself that he was right, by peering into the mass of beautiful leaves which floated before his inquiring vision. "Nay," said his friend, "I pro-

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test they are green : you must surely be the subject of some strange optical illusion." A third friend here interposed, who had discovered the secret of the mistake. "The leaves," he observed, "of this beautiful tree are green on one side, and white on the other. You are standing on opposite sides of the tree, and the wind is blowing the leaves all in one direction; so that to you all appear white, and to you they are all green." Other objects of observation besides trees have been contemplated from opposite points of view, and of course widely different conclusions have been reached concerning them. There are few things on which men do not think differently, and, alas! too often erroneously. We are at a loss to name a subject which has gained perfect unanimity of opinion. Certain it is that such unanimity has not been awarded to the "class-meeting" among those who know it only by report. The "class-meeting," what is it? Every member of the Wesleyan-Methodist church, by producing his "Rules," can show that a class consists of persons who are desirous to "flee from the

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wrath to come," perhaps about twelve in number, and one of them called the Leader. And that such a company generally forms a section of a larger "company of men, having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united, in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

The class-meeting, therefore, is calculated to be a school of instruction; a brook by the way; a refreshment-room for travellers. Here, the disconsolate christian is directed to the God of all consolation; the thirsty soul is directed to "the Fountain of living waters;" the suffering follower of the Saviour meets with sympathy from fellow-sufferers, and the rejoicing saint meets with those in whose breast exists the counterpart of his own feelings, and the echo of his own joys. Here, the weary traveller is refreshed, and starts with new vigour on his journey to Canaan; and the tired soldier is rested and invigorated for the campaign of the morrow. Here the weakness of "Little-faith"

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is strengthened, the worldliness of "Worldly-love" is chased away, the covetousness of "Save-all" is melted into benevolence, and the duplicity of "By-ends" is transformed into sterling straight-forwardness. Here sluggishness is converted into activity, misanthropy into philanthropy, tears into smiles, sorrows into joys, sighs into songs, clouds into sunshine, winter into summer, and the "fear which hath torment" into "perfect love which casteth out fear."

Class-meetings are the little tents of Israel, pitched in every direction around the mercy-seat and the Shekinah, for the refreshment of the tribes during their wilderness state. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river-side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters, He shall pour the water out of his bucket, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his King shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and

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cursed is he that curseth thee."

Our sainted founder observes:—"Upon reflection, I could not but observe this was the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity. In the earliest times those whom God sent forth 'preached the Gospel to every creature;' and the ἀκροώμενοι, 'the body of hearers,' were mostly either Jews or Heathens; but as soon as any of these were so convinced of the truth as to forsake sin, and seek the Gospel salvation, they immediately joined them together, took an account of their names, advised them to watch over each other, and met these κατηχούμενοι, 'catechumens,' (as they were then called,) apart from the great congregation, that they might instruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them and for them, according to their several necessities.' Thousands of holy and happy christians can bear testimony to the value of these weekly means of grace; and tens of thousands before the throne, who have gone up "through much tribulation," reflect upon them with pleasure in that land of rest where "their works do follow them."

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But we are looking at one side of the tree only. Let us go over for a moment to the other side. Here is a number of individuals holding opinions opposite to those we have uttered, many of whom are very sincere observers, and earnest inquirers after truth. Let us listen for a moment to the sentiments they are expressing. "It is a Popish ordinance," says one, not very familiar with Methodist economy. "I understand it is a place of confession; and, for my part, I see no difference in confessing in the class-meeting, and confessing to the Priest." "It is not commanded in Scripture," observes another; "but is obviously an ordinance of man, and therefore to be avoided." "It makes too large a demand upon my modesty," remarks a timid one: "I could not speak on any account; I am too nervous." "It may be all very well in itself," replies a fourth: "but the people are so very ignorant, and the Leader especially so very illiterate, that I can see no advantage in associating with such persons."

"I can get to heaven without it," replies a fifth; while a number unite with a sixth in the

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expression of his opinion, "I do not know why, but I do not like it."

There may be amongst the readers of "Neglected Things" those who hold these adverse opinions; and we humbly ask a hearing, that we may speak to their convictions. "It is a Popish ordinance." The class-room is indeed the place where earnest confession of sin, with strong cries and tears, is often heard; but that confession is made, not in the expectation of receiving "absolution" from a man "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped," but for the instruction and warning of other persons, and with a view to enlist their sympathies, prayers, and counsels. The Leader himself, being a layman, not a Priest, the class-meeting is an antagonist of "auricular confession," and is expediting the overthrow of the confessional.

"But there is no Scripture authority for the class-meeting," is the second objection. Nor was there any express command in God's own precious revelation to originate that *Missionary Society*, of which, perhaps, you are a member

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and a collector; nor were you told, in so many words, that you ought to visit the humble cottage in your neighbourhood, for the purpose of lending weekly a religious tract; and you might search a long time before you will find in the Bible any mention of Sunday-schools; and yet, it may be, these have your hearty concurrence and support, because you perceive they are the means of doing good which have been developed by circumstances obviously providential, adjusted by the prudence and zeal of the church, and abundantly honoured of God. The class-meeting is to be placed in the same category, received with the same favour, and employed on the same authority.

“I cannot speak,” is the third objection raised. Can you speak in the domestic circle? Are you dumb on common topics of conversation in every-day life? Are you penitent, and can you not inquire what you must do to be saved? Are you happy in God’s love, and can you not say, “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for *my soul*?” Can you think of the rich, unmerited,

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countless, and everlasting blessings which cluster around you, and not feel that you are constrained to praise God: and that if you were to "hold your peace, the very stones would cry out against you?" Can you reflect on your hairbreadth escapes, on your miraculous rescues from danger and from death, without feeling that you are encompassed about with songs of deliverance? And if the songs are written upon every surrounding object,—if every part of your dwelling, every member of your family, every year in your history, every page in your diary, presents a song, will you not sing it? And where will you find a more convenient and suitable audience than in the class-room? One of the sweet singers of Israel (himself not of Methodist type) says, "Is he" (the young and ardent convert) "crying in the gladness of his soul, 'Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob?' Alike in the cathedral and the conventicle, he is apt to be depressed by an organic solo or a rueful dirge; but escaping to the Methodist class-meeting, he finds their glory all awake. They

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are taking the psalm, and bringing the pleasant harp with the psalter, and blowing the trumpet; and, with exulting rivalry, young men and maidens, old men and children, are praising the Lord. In the eagerness of his first love, is he exclaiming, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul?' but no body will stop to listen. And so, for an audience, he is driven away to the love-feast or class-meeting."

The fourth objection is, that "the people are ignorant, the Leader illiterate, and the thing altogether mean and degrading." "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Have you superior light? Let it shine in the class-room. Have you superior love? There let it burn. You do not degrade yourself by exercising the charities of your nature upon those whom you deem beneath you.

"Those gentle charities which draw
Man closer with his kind;
Those sweet humanities which make
The music which they find."

"*I can get to heaven without it,*" is the next

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objection. Are you quite sure that you can perform all the functions of the Christian life as well without it as with it? Can you mount, run, walk, fight, wrestle, suffer, conquer, and rejoice as well? Might not some grey-headed pilgrim, leaning upon the top of his staff; or some weeping Jeremiah, from his dungeon; or some tuneful David, from his orchestra; or some seraphic Paul, from the third heaven; or some living John, from the Lord's breast; drop a word or two, helping to expand your views, and warm your heart, and strengthen your faith, and accelerate your progress? If you hope to commune in heaven with the saints and the excellent of the earth, might it not be well to commune with them here?

"I do not know why, but I do not like it." is the last objection. Do you like repentance, prayer, self-denial, self-examination, the crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts? Have you peace with God, joy in the Holy Ghost, real, heartfelt, saving godliness? or do not your affections cleave to the earth? Have not you left your first love? Is not the keen

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edge of your piety gone? Is it not inconvenient now to go to class? Are your circumstances improved, and do you fancy it is more respectable to go to another church? Sons and daughters of Methodist sires! ye who are casting away this badge in which your fathers gloried, and which they left you as a sacred memorial! think of their simplicity, piety, meekness, and zeal, of their holy lives and triumphant deaths, and endeavour to catch their falling mantles, to tread in their steps, and be followers of their faith and patience. "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." "And the Lord God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." Therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession."

THE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

"It is with spiritual objects as with the most attractive or sublime scenes of nature. The glowing sunrise, the gleaming river, the sea roused by the storm into majesty, summer walking the earth, decked in a robe of flowers, the brow of night sparkling with its countless gems. Many regard these as with the eyes of a brute; they excite in them no reflection, they call forth no grateful exclamation. Even so the surpassing glories of the Gospel, the Cross of Calvary, the crown of heaven, are lost on eyes which have become familiar with them from the cradle and a mother's knee."—DR. GUTHRIE.

THE night of the betrayal was one long to be remembered. It had no parallel in all the records of preceding ages, nor could it be repeated. Near fifteen hundred years before, Egypt was witness of a strange night. Strange scenes were witnessed, and strange sounds were heard, on the eve of Israel's exodus; but the eve of the crucifixion was marked by scenes and sounds more wondrous far. On that night the Lord of glory, whom all the angels vie in adoring, performed the mean service of washing the

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feet of poor disciples, to teach their earth-loving hearts the sweet lesson of humility. On that night the paschal hymn was sung, the paschal lamb was killed, and the paschal feast was celebrated for the last time, in the upper room of a Jew, who had the honour to entertain the noblest guest that Jerusalem could boast at that feast. On that night the valedictory discourse was preached, so abundant in consolations ; and was followed by the parting prayer for the unity, peace, purity, prosperity, and final glorification of the church militant. On that night Kedron was crossed ; and

“Hierarchies in Heaven paused while adoring,
The golden string'd lyre of each angel grew mute ;
They came to dark earth, and in wonder bent o'er Him
Who knelt in deep anguish at Kedron's brook.”

Then the Lord went into Gethsemane, where He sustained an agony in comparison of which all the sufferings of the “Man of sorrows” previously endured were light ; for then He emphatically “began to be sorrowful.” And, lo ! before a sword was drawn, or a thorn planted, or a hand raised, or a scourge inflicted, *or the traitor's kiss given*, or the blood-thirsty

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cry, "Away with Him!" heard; even then His agony was such, that, within a few minutes after its commencement, He was bathed in blood. And while the billows of a righteous displeasure passed over Him, they forced from Him this piercing cry: "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me?" On that night hell rallied its forces for a great struggle; nature trembled, as if apprehensive of some awful convulsion; the veil of the temple awaited an irrecoverable rending; while angels, leaving the Sufferer to "tread the wine-press alone," prepared their harps of gold, to triumph over the issue. O! how many wondrous transactions were crowded into the history of that one short night! On "the same night in which He was betrayed" the Lord Jesus "took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: *this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*"

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This do, and commemorate an event more glorious than was ever made remembrance of by the splendid edifice, the lofty column, or the tapering obelisk. *This do*, and show forth the Lord's death ; declare the sad yet glorious conceptions of Gethsemane and Calvary. *This do*, and confess that I am Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *This do*, and feel the healing balm flow into your wounded conscience, and feel the purifying stream flow over your polluted spirit, and touch the cross, and feel

" That touch which touch'd not angels ; more Divine
Than that which touch'd confusion into form,
And darkness into glory.

* * * * *
That touch, which charm celestial, heals the soul
Diseased, drives pain from guilt, lights life in death ;
Turns earth to heaven ; to heavenly thrones transforms
The ghastly ruins of the mouldering tomb."

This do, and confess your true pilgrim character, and that here you have no continuing city, but that ye seek one to come. *This do*, and manifest the true unity of believers before infidels, and Turks, and Heathens. *This do*, from generation to generation, and be cheered

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amid your trials ; until the end of time, and the new heavens and the new earth shall arise out of a sin-bruised and wrath-stricken system ; until " I come."

Does history relate one other wish so tender, or one expressed by lips so graceful, or one spoken by a heart so full of love, or one iterated under circumstances so impressive ? We answer, No. It is the last command of the dying Lord. That such a command should be forgotten, or slighted, or perverted, or insulted, is surely marvellous. It was no marvel that the disciples should assemble on the first day of the week to obey that injunction. It was no marvel that, when persecution raged amongst the Vaudois and old British, multitudes should then, when driven from the peaceful sanctuary, repair to their mountain-fastnesses ; and, although hunted by a barbarous soldiery, and liable to be dragged to a bloody tribunal, and suffer an awful death, be found cheerfully braving the fierce interdict, to obey their dying Lord's request. The marvel is, that long ere this, men of every colour, and of every clime,—

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that all the nations have not joined hand to hand, and heart to heart, and in one holy brotherhood, and with one loud united voice, and amid the attention of angels, principalities, and powers, exclaimed, "We do this in remembrance of Thee."

The greatest marvel of all is, that, when the Lord's table is prepared, any one naming the name of Christ should causelessly and carelessly turn his back upon the solemn ordinance, as though it were a thing of nought! How many do it! And if the number of the friends of the Redeemer is to be estimated by what is often seen on sacramental occasions, who does not shudder at the paucity of that number? Doubtless in many cases absence from the Lord's table arises from defective information, rather than from deliberate neglect; but are not the means of knowing and appreciating this duty placed within the reach of all? The neglect of such means of information must be highly criminal. Surely to be fed by faith in the sacrament is not less essential to spiritual *growth*, than to be instructed by the sermon

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or warmed by the prayer-meeting; and yet are there not foolish comparisons instituted between the one and the other, often to the disadvantage of the solemn ordinance of the Supper? Do not many who are charmed by the eloquence of the pulpit, and who are delighted by social prayer, manifest an inexplicable indifference when the sacrament of the Lord's supper is to be celebrated? The same lips which gave utterance to the solemn injunction, "take heed how ye hear;" and to the blessed announcement, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them;" also enunciated the dying command, "This do in remembrance of Me." Reader, dost thou refuse to obey thy Lord's last precept? Think, whether thou art not robbing thyself of the sweetest grapes of Eschol, and depriving thyself of the most entrancing glimpses of the beatific vision! The poet sings:—

"From Jesu's sacrifice
And sacrament we rise,
Borne on wings of faith and love
To the mansions of the blest,

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Triumph with the saints above,
Share that everlasting feast.

“The Truth, the Deity,
We there unveil'd shall see;
Lose in that transporting sight
All we felt or fear'd below;
Torrents of unmix'd delight
There our raptured souls o'erflow.”

“To-morrow is the half-yearly fast,” said a friend to us one evening, when on a visit to a town in North Britain; “and Sabbath first is the sacramental Sabbath;” adding, “Perhaps you will have no objection to go to the kirk in the morning, and hear the Rev.——.” “None whatever,” was our ready reply. The morning came: it was Thursday. Much to our surprise, as a southern, the shops were all closed, business was totally suspended, and the quiet of Sabbath pervaded the otherwise busy community, as though that holy day had forgotten the time of its visit, and dropped from the skies in the very middle of the week. At the hour for worship, the streets were thronged with persons directing their steps to the different places of worship: we joined the stream, *and on entering* the stately edifice to which we

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had been invited, found it crowded from side to side. After the service had closed, tokens (small pieces of metal, like coin) were dealt out to the intending communicants by the "elders" of the church, and the crowd returned home to reassemble in the afternoon of the day.

Saturday came : and again, as if by magic, business was suspended, and the churches were crowded for the space of two hours, while a preparation-sermon was preached. At length Sunday came. And a glorious sight it is to see the streets in Edinburgh or Dundee on a Sunday morning, but especially on the sacramental Sabbath. Such were the streams of well-dressed people flowing through all the principal thoroughfares, as to impress us with the idea that the rule is to go to kirk, the exception to remain at home. The service proceeded as usual until the sermon closed ; and then, no rushing to the doors, no thinning of the congregation until a mere skeleton is left. The mass remained to honour our Lord's last command. At each table the communicants were addressed by the Minister, (several Min-

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isters assisting on the occasion,) until the whole congregation had communicated. That service extended from 10 A.M., to 5-30 P.M. We do not intimate that all who approached the Lord's table on that memorable day were sincere and acceptable worshippers ; but we left the kirk burning with the desire that in every land such a national recognition of the solemn will of our Lord were established as is seen in the half-yearly sacrament of Scotland.

Devotion in God's House.

"DEVOTION borrows music's tone,
And music takes devotion's wing,
And, like the bird that hails the sun,
They soar to heaven, and, soaring, sing."

"I WISH there was a higher degree of devotion in our congregation," said Arthur — one day, to an intimate Christian friend, with whom he was conversing on the all-important subject of a revival of religion. "Do you observe," added he, "how exceedingly irreverent many persons are during the time of prayer, and how little access the worshippers have into the 'holiest of all?'" I have indeed remarked it with great regret," replied Robert —. "Better congregations we never had; a more faithful Ministry we were never favoured with; but, somehow or other, there is an indifference overspreading the people which is chilling and paralysing. As to the singing, instead of arising from all parts of the congregation,

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it is confined to the choir; while during the sermon, except some bright coruscation is thrown off, or some bold stroke of oratory falls suddenly and unexpectedly, like a thunder-clap, upon the ear and heart, a vagueness of expression languishes upon the countenances of the people, which it is agonizing to behold, and which indicates as little interest in the service, as though it were of no importance." "It is even so," replied Arthur——. while his breast heaved with emotion, and his heart trembled for the ark of the Lord: "and what makes the case **all the** more distressing, is the fact that it used not to be so; or, at least, not to the same extent. **Well** do I remember, when these old and trembling limbs were young and active, that the same expositions of truth, and the same appeals to the heart, would have fixed the attention, and melted into tears the assembled multitude, and here, and there, and yonder, one should hear the voice of penitence or the voice of praise gushing up from an everflowing heart: but now emotion is dead." "Yes, I believe that *the great want* of the times is a devotional

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spirit, especially in the public services of God's house; and for this blessing let us plead with God until 'the o'erwhelming power of saving grace' descends upon the people."

What is devotion? It is not the morbid spirit struck with awe by material glory. It is not the imposing effect of the long-drawn aisle, the fretted vault, the stately column, and the painted window. It is not the enchanting effect produced by the sound of organ or harp, aided by the mingled voices of musicians. It is not a reverence inspired by the superstitious and blasphemous notion that the bread and wine of the sacrament are converted into the body and blood of Christ; heightened by the thought that the man who effects the miracle has the power of life and death entrusted to him. O, no! It is the overshadowing glory of Him whose presence at Bethel led Jacob to exclaim, "How dreadful is this place!" and at Sinai constrained Moses to confess, "I exceedingly fear and quake;" and that made a modern poet sing,—

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" My weakness bends beneath the weight ;
O'erpowered, I sink, I faint, I die."

Devotion is spiritual ; and how much there is in public worship to enkindle and influence the spirit of true devotion ! If cherubic choirs, pouring forth songs of high and lofty praise, and rapt seraphs, burning with an inextinguishable flame of love, hide themselves under their wings from the overpowering rays of ineffable glory, what abundant reason must polluted man have to cast himself in the dust, and cry, "*Unclean, unclean !*" If heaven's adoring multitudes cease not day or night to cry, "Holy, holy, holy ;" shall sinners find time to pause ? When God invites to an audience, and angels wait to minister ; when the throne of grace is accessible, and the Sabbath throws its glory around ; when truth speaks instructingly, and mercy beckons beseechingly, and God waits to be gracious to returning sinners, can devotion be absent from any heart ?

Divine worship consists chiefly of *praise and prayer*, with the accessory of *instruction* ; and in each act of worship, every member of the

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congregation is required to engage. We cannot sing by proxy, or pray by proxy, or be instructed by proxy.

Praise. —“He that offereth praise glorifieth Thee.” O, how delightful it is to listen to a full chorus of lips, while the song of hearts ascends to mingle itself with the chorus of the skies! Is this the case when the voice of praise ascends only from the choir; when the officials only engage in the exercise, as if they were privileged above their fellow-worshippers to touch the timbrel and the harp, and send the music of earth to bear the tidings to heaven that children of Zion are joyful in their King? Such partial praise is unknown in heaven. The song of Moses and the Lamb is not chanted by a small number of the “elders,” aided by a small section of the “living creatures.” “I beheld,” said the favoured John, “and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands.”

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" By faith the upper choir we meet ;
And challenge them to sing
Jehovah, on His shining seat,
Our Maker and our King.

" The King, whose glorious face ye see,
For us His crown resign'd ;
That fulness of the Deity,
He died for all mankind !"

Then let " the seraphs nearest the throne look down on us poor ransomed worms ;" and let us emulate " heaven's superior praise."

The second part of Divine worship is *prayer*. When the Minister, either by the aid of a form prepared for the purpose, or extemporaneously, addresses himself to the Majesty on high, on behalf of himself and the people ; when he seeks to present at the footstool of Divine mercy the sins and sorrows, griefs and pains, with which every heart in that assembly is afflicted ; surely, then, every one will feel and say, " This is holy ground, and I must worship : " and thus, by earnest breathing of soul to God, join with God's Minister in laying hold of God's strength. When the ark was brought into the city of David, and the psalm was offered, "**ALL THE PEOPLE SAID, AMEN.**" What a glorious response !

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How must the hands of David have been upheld, and how must the joyfulness of that occasion have been heightened by the universal **AMEN**. On board that burning "Amazon," all pray, all are in earnest. The Captain who is at his wits' end, the sailors who lower the boats, the mother, who with one hand clings to the raft, and with the other clasps her child, all pray, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" You do not see one standing with stoical indifference here, and another yonder; you do not see one criticising the prayer of his fellow-sufferers, and another questioning whether it is right to pray at all. O, no! whilst the waves yawn beneath, and the flames devour around, every soul on board feels that he must pray; and he does pray. O, for the same earnestness in the house of God! Then should we have "showers of blessing."

Instruction is another part of Divine service, for which a messenger is sent by Divine appointment, whose lips teach knowledge, and whose one desire is to present those to whom he ministers "perfect in Christ Jesus." Surely.

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now, when salvation is the theme, the congregation will be all eye and all ear. Surely, now, no heart will wander, no eye will remain unfixed; but as when the waving corn bends beneath the gentle breezes of the evening, so will that audience bend beneath those gentler teachings. But, is it so? Let us enter the sacred edifice: the assembly have just resumed their seats, after hymning the praises of God, and the servant of God rises to deliver his message. He announces the text: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The Gospel is the theme. The good news is opened up, its truth and divinity are established, its mysteries are disclosed, its glories are unfolded, its potency is demonstrated. The Preacher warms with his theme, and glories only in "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Look around: how uninterested, how uncharmed, are many of the hearers! There is the vacant gaze, and restlessness, together with the drowsy countenance; all conspiring to impress you with the awful fact, that "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" is here heralded in vain.

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The Minister weeps: he feels discouraged; and, by such repeated insults offered both to himself and to his message, is almost powerless to prevent the rising tide of indifference from setting in upon his own soul. The Holy Ghost is grieved. Often has He hovered over that pulpit, and pointed to an inscription on it, "Take heed how ye hear;" and still He points. Often has He sharpened the sword wielded by the Minister, and shed unction upon his ministrations; and He does so still: but His appeals have been so repeatedly resisted by the criminal indifference of the hearers, that He is just departing, and ready to write upon the sinner's pew, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

The effect upon the hearer himself is fatal. Feeling no interest in what is declared from the pulpit, he fails to understand it; and, therefore, to remember it; and therefore, to practise it. His pride is unhumiliated, his will is unsubdued, his sins are unpardoned, his heart is unchanged, and the wrath of God abideth on him. Strangely familiar with reli-

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gious truths, and ordinances, and Ministers, he is as strangely unacquainted with all that is saving in them. Fluent in the social circle when evangelical truth is the theme, or ecclesiastical polity the subject; eloquent in his advocacy of the Bible, Missionary, or School Society, he is nevertheless dumb at the family altar, seldom seen at the Lord's table, and often absent from class.

Look at the effect of this evil upon the congregation. A Minister some time ago had an engagement to preach to an old-established congregation, for the first time. On his arrival, he found a numerous and somewhat respectable audience. The message of mercy was delivered, the benediction was pronounced, and the Minister left the chapel accompanied by an aged Christian connected with a neighbouring church, of whom some inquiries were made respecting the past history and present state of the church and congregation which had just dispersed. From the answers given, the following facts were elicited; namely, that the congregation *had for years* been good, the contributions to

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the several *funds* of the body to which it belonged had been respectable; "But," said the aged Christian, with painful emphasis, "there has not been a single conversion amongst that people for fifteen years."

"There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

"To pass that limit is to die,
To die, as if by stealth:
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Or fade the glow of health.

"But on that forehead God has set
Indelibly a mark,
Unseen by man; for man, as yet,
Is blind, and in the dark.

"He thinks, he feels, that all is well,
And every fear is calm'd;
He LIVES, he DIES, he wakes in HELL,
Not only DOOM'D, but DAMN'D.

"O! where is this mysterious bourne,
By which our path is cross'd?
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn,
That he who goes is LOST.

"An answer from the skies is sent:
'Ye that from God depart,
While it is call'd TO-DAY repent,
And HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART.' "

The Family Altar.

“FOOD, raiment, dwelling, health, and friends,
Thou, Lord, hast made our lot ;
With Thee our bliss begins and ends,
As we are Thine, or not.”

“For these we bend the humble knee,
Our grateful spirits bow ;
Yet from Thy gifts we turn to Thee,
Be Thou our portion, THOU.”

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

EVERYBODY has read the “Cotter’s Saturday Night,” which, if Burns had written nothing else, would have made his name immortal. The poem opens with a description of “the toil-worn cotter” returning to his home on a shortening winter’s day. The weekly toil being at an end, the cattle, mired and weary, are retreating from the plough, and the “blackening trains o’ crows” are speeding away to the distant woodlands. The spade, the mattock, and the hoe are laid aside, and the rest

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of the Scottish Sabbath is looked for hopefully.

And now, rising in the distance over the moor, the lowly cot appears, sheltered by an aged tree. The children, "expectant wee things," are seen "wi' flitcher in noise an' glee," "todlin stachet through, to meet their dad." He reaches the house; and there the cheerful fire, "blinkin bonnilie," and the clean hearth-stone, his thrifty wife's smile, and the lisping infant prattling on his knee,

"Do a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An, mak him quite forget his labour and his toil."

Then, by and by, the elder "bairns" come dropping in, one after another, from the neighbouring farmers, in whose service they are engaged. The brothers and sisters meet with joy unfeigned, and kindly inquire for each other's welfare, and severally relate what they have heard and seen. The mother "wi' her needle an' her sheers," is making old clothes look almost as well as new. The father mixes admonition. The young folks are warned to *obey the command of their master and mis-*

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tress, to mind their labours with a diligent hand, "to fear the Lord alway," to mind their duty in the morning and evening, to implore His counsel and assistance; and they are encouraged to hope that they shall not seek His face in vain.

The cheerful supper is next introduced, crowning the simple board: "the halesome parritch," and "the sowp their only hawkie does afford," the pure and simple meal of the Scottish peasantry, and worthy the notice of pampered stomachs burning with indigestion.

But the following scene crowns the whole, in its matchless simplicity and beauty:—

"The cheerfu' supper done," a wide circle is formed around the ingle, and seriousness instinctively spreads o'er every face. "The sire," laying aside his bonnet, carefully turns over "the big ha' Bible," once the property and the pride of his father. He next selects a portion (psalm) with judicious care, and solemnly commences the evening service with, "Let us worship God;" when all unite to chant their *artless notes to the wild warbling measures of*

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"Dundee," or "Plaintive Martyrs," or "Noble Elgin;" the sweetest lays of Scotia.

"Compared with these, Italian trills are tame,"

and have no unison with the praise of our great Creator.

The sacred page is next read by "the Priest-like father;" and the portion is of "Abraham the friend of God," or Moses warring with Amalek's ungracious progeny, or "Job's pathetic plaint," or "rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire."

"Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How he, who bore in heaven the sacred name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head."

The Scriptures having been read, they kneel to "Heaven's Eternal King," while

"The saint, the father, and the husband prays;"

and hope exultingly springs up in each member of that lovely circle, that they shall all meet again in future days;

"No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear."

What a delightful picture is here presented

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for our eye to gaze upon ! And who, we ask, can look steadily upon it, and not discern its charms, and feel its earnest appeal to his judgment and his heart ?

“ Compared with this, how poor Religion’s pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art ;
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion’s every grace, except the heart ! ”

Do we wonder that the great Chief of Israel’s armies should resolve that “ his house should serve the Lord,” or that a King should “ return to bless his household ? ” The tenderest associations are identified with the family altar. It is there the Christian father deepens the reproof or counsel he has given to his child. It is there he seeks to check the progress of corruption, and foster the early developments of grace. The family crosses and rods, as well as its triumphs and its joys, are all carried to that hallowed spot, and there “ sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” No new duty is entered upon, no old one is prosecuted, without a daily baptism at the family altar. It is there the father commends the child to God, *when he is leaving the parental roof to tread*

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the untried paths of the world, and remembers him ever after, however distant. And the family altar becomes the solace and the stay of the absent one, amid the bruises of the thorny path of life. And then when death stealthily approaches, and puts out one of the lights of their habitation, the family altar becomes the fountain whence wounded hearts can draw heavenly consolation; and "the valley of Achor," where the echo of the loved one's voice is heard.

The altar in the family is like the compass in the ship,—its guide; like the sun in the heavens,—its light; like a stream in the desert,—its solace; like the lightning-rod to the building,—warding off all evil. It checks vices in the family, heals breaches in the house, cherishes domestic affections, sanctifies domestic bereavements, and when all else fails, and every comfort is withdrawn, and every endeared one is passed into eternity, it is the spot where the only surviving member may repose, and revel in the most interesting reminiscences, and *luxuriate in the most brilliant prospects.*

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So simple, so beautiful, so endeared by a thousand interesting associations, shall we venture to put this amongst our "neglected things?" We fear we must, not indeed for the sake of making a chapter, or filling a page, but simply because it is in real life frequently slighted and neglected.

We rejoice to be able to certify, as the result of careful observation in the walks of Christian life, that there are hundreds and thousands of godly families who conscientiously attend to this duty; but in others it is criminally set aside. Perhaps it is observed in the morning, and omitted in the evening; or neglected in the morning, and attended to in the evening.

It has been said, that "those families who *pray*, do well; those who *read* and pray, do better; but those who *sing*, and read, and pray, do best of all." In many cases, the reading of the Scriptures is omitted altogether. In other cases, some members of the family are overlooked in this duty. "Some mornings since," says a writer in the "Presbyterian Advocate," "I was at the house of a very worthy man,

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whose wife was behind him in no proposal to do good. The family were called in; husband, wife, children, and stranger; but *no servants*. I had read a portion of Scripture, and was leading in prayer, when I heard a rattling of knives and forks. As I knew all that belonged to the house, I could very easily tell why, and also by whom. The absence was not from any false pride, or shame to have the servants appear in the dress in which the duties of the kitchen or house were performed, or any objection; but simply sheer thoughtlessness. They *did not think*; which was supposed to be a sufficient excuse for neglecting it."

Reader, hast thou an altar in thy house? Perhaps thy father had; and often didst thou bend the knee there. Perhaps thou hadst an altar thyself, reared with thine own hands in brighter, better days; but those same hands have aided to break it down, and God has written ICHABOD upon the ruin. Make haste to repair it; and "blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the *fruit of thy cattle*, the increase of thy kine, and

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the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out." If, however, thou bend not the knee, nor lift the eye, nor sing the hymn, nor read the chapter, nor offer the prayer, tremble. The "curse" pronounced on those nations and those families which call not upon God's name, hangeth over thee.

Rowland Hill was once driven by a storm of rain into a village inn, and compelled to spend the night. When it grew late, the landlord sent a request by the waiter that the guest would go to bed. Mr. H. replied, "I have been waiting a long time, expecting to be called to family prayer." "Family prayer! I don't know what you mean, Sir: we never have such things here." "Indeed: then tell your master, I cannot go to bed until we have had family prayer." The waiter informed his master, who, in great consternation, bounced into the room occupied by the faithful Minister, and said, "Sir, I wish you would go to bed. I cannot go until I have seen all the

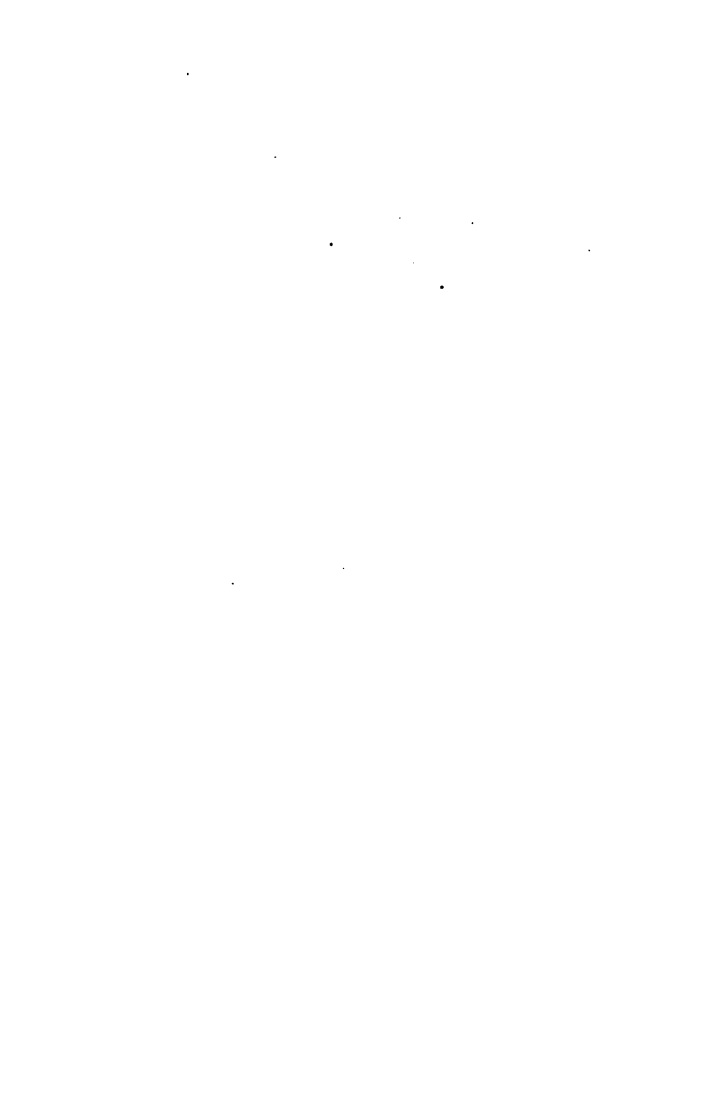
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lights out. I am so afraid of fire." "So am I," was the reply! "but I have been expecting to be summoned to family prayer." "All very good, Sir; but it cannot be done at an inn." "Indeed! then pray get me my horse. I cannot sleep in a house where there is no family prayer." The host preferred to dismiss his prejudice, rather than his guest, and said, "I have no objection to have prayer; but I don't know how." "Well, then, summon your people, and let us see what can be done." The landlord obeyed, and in a few minutes the astonished domestics were upon their knees, and the landlord called upon to pray. "Sir, I never prayed in my life. I don't know how." "Ask God to teach you," was the gentle reply. The landlord said, folding his hands, "God, teach us how to pray." "That is prayer, my friend," cried Mr. H., joyfully: "Go on." "I am sure I don't know what to say now, Sir." "Yes you do: God has taught you how to pray. Now thank him for it." "Thank you, God Almighty, for letting us pray to you!"

"*Amen! Amen!*" exclaimed Mr. H., and

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prayed himself. Two years afterwards, Mr. H. found in that small village a chapel and a school, as the result of the first effort of family prayer at the "Black Lion."



Church Work.

"SON, go work to-day in my vineyard."—Matt. xxi. 28.

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.—Matt. ix. 36—38.

It is said that when Hugo Grotius was treading the dark valley of the shadow of death, such were the abasing views he had of himself, that he expressed a wish that he could change conditions with John Urick, a poor but devout man. His friends, seeking to administer consolation, reminded him of his great industry and learned performances; to which he replied with a sigh, "*Heu! vitam perdidit operose nihil agendo.*" ("Alas! I have squandered my life away laboriously in doing nothing.") How many of us have greater cause to prefer this charge at the bar of our conscience!

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Our solemn vocation, as "followers of Christ," requires vigorous and untiring industry, as well as patient and unwavering confidence. Christianity is not only a system of faith, but of practice. It invites us to rest; it also calls us to labour. It cries in the ears of the perishing, while it points to the blood-stained standard, "Believe." It adds in language not less intelligible and forcible, "Faith without works is dead." He who accepts the sacred vocation under the impression that he will have no duties to perform, betrays ignorance of the first principles of the Gospel. The kingdom of God is a *vineyard*; and there is hedging work, and planting work, and watering work, and pruning work. Or it is a *building*; and there is a foundation to be laid, walls to be raised, and a top-stone to be brought on. Or it is a *sheep-fold*; and sheep have to be gathered, and fed, and protected. And various agents and talents are needed for the successful prosecution of the service of the King. He himself said, "I must work the works of *Him that sent me*, while it is day. The night

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cometh, when no man can work." And the baptized Apostles testify, "We are labourers together with God." For the efficient prosecution of the high and merciful purposes of the Redeemer, there must not only be vigorous, but combined and systematic action: for "He gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Combined action is essential to all great undertakings. "Union is strength," not only in science, in politics, in commerce, and in warfare, but also in religion.

A celebrated writer on zoology, speaking of the half million of species supposed to exist either in a living or fossil state, says, "At first sight it seems a hopeless task for men to attain to the knowledge of such a multitude. But, though one man could do little of himself, the combined exertions of many labourers at the same time, in various countries, may do much; and, as each generation transmits, by means of books, the knowledge it has acquired,

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each successive generation starts in its researches from the vantage-ground gained by the labours of its predecessors." And so, looking at the countless myriads of redeemed but unsaved men, —their Satanic enmity, their blind prejudices, the selfish and worldly influences by which they are spell-bound and hedged up,—it seems hopeless to attempt the realisation of the sublime purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, seated at the Father's right hand, is expecting "that His enemies be made His footstool;" but the combined efforts of many labourers, in different departments, possessing various talents, all working at the same time, and all influenced by that one Spirit who worketh all in all, can do much. And, as each generation transmits to posterity the fruit of its labours, (for "other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours,") each successive generation starts in its toils from the vantage-ground gained by the labour of its predecessors; and we therefore exultingly predict the immortal empire of Christ, and the subjugation of *the world to Him.*

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When the first assault was made upon the great citadel of Satan at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, although its foundation had stood for ages, and its walls of more than granite were built according to the strongest principles of resistance known in the council of the Prince of darkness, those walls were shattered. And, while the foundations themselves gave way, the enemy surrendered, and three thousand of the most bitter, and prejudiced, and determined foes of Christ were made His willing captives; and thus a pledge was given for the ultimate and universal triumph of the Gospel.

This is an age of action. The man who slumbers must submit to be outstripped by his competitors, if he be not trampled under foot by them. This is an age when men are to be found in sufficient number, and with adequate qualifications, for any great enterprise that may be attempted. Australia opened its golden veins and invited immigration, and thousands upon thousands rushed forth to seize the prize, and found a colony that will bear an important part in the future history of the world. An

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ambitious and powerful Sovereign menaces the peace of Europe, and therefore must be humbled. Then eighty thousand men embark to defend the honour of their country against the great oppressor.

But the work of God languishes for want of help. All hail to the thousands of willing labourers in our churches! "Your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "Therefore, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." But we appeal to you to say, if the *labour* done in the church is equal to the *demand*.

Go into your Committee-Meeting: there sits the Secretary unsustained by the presence of any of its members, and seriously thinking of resigning his office; so dispirited has he become by the habitual neglect of others. And, although the Committee is entrusted with the working of one of the most important schemes of the church, yet here *the labour is not equal to the demand*.—Visit that Leaders'-Meeting: *the Minister* is in his place awaiting the arrival of the Leaders. He has been conducting public

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service, but they were not there. At length, two drop in, instead of ten ; or five, instead of forty. Class A is vacant, or class B ; but no one is found to fill up the vacancy. . And here, again, yon feel painfully that *the labour is not equal to the demand*.—Visit that Sunday-school : (perhaps the most popular institution of the day :) who are its teachers? Two or three old disciples, and inexperienced youths who have been just admitted, perhaps prematurely, to fill up vacancies. Here, again, you exclaim, *The labour is not equal to the demand*. And so we might go on.

If we ask the reason, it cannot be said that there is not material in the church. Where there is talent for prosecuting the learned professions with success, or building and working a manufactory, or conducting a thriving trade, there must be talent for the work of the church. Where there is talent for manufacturing beautiful fabrics, conducting an extensive business, or pursuing eminence in the fine arts, there must be talent for serving on Committees, leading classes, teaching in and conducting Sunday-schools, or

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distributing tracts. This talent we ask: we want it to be fully consecrated to the work of the church.

CHURCH MEMBERS, we ask you to leave your mills, your counting-houses, your shops, and come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. "You cannot come?" Why? Can you find time to be afflicted? or *can you find time to die?* Perhaps you "feel extremely desirous that church-institutions should be sustained amply and vigorously, and that the aggressive principle should be fully carried out," and "you will freely give your subscription for that purpose; but your services really cannot be spared from your business, so numerous are its engagements, so pressing are its claims, and so imperative its demands." But, we ask, of what avail are funds, if you have not agents to work out the plans that funds are intended to sustain? Your Ministers cannot do it alone. Of what avail would be your Admirals and Officers without the working-men of the fleets? *The granite walls of the enemy's forts would show defiance to their courage and their skill,*

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and so Ministers and others engaged in the work of the Lord are comparatively powerless without your assistance.

Amongst the many beautiful pictures in the ever-beautiful life of the "Crucified One," few are more touching than one recorded in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark. The scene is Bethany, the village so often honoured by the presence of the Prince of the Kings of the earth. In the house of one Simon a leper, the Saviour sat at meat. There came in a woman having an alabaster-box of very precious ointment, and she poured its odoriferous contents upon His sacred head, and the house became fragrant with perfume. Mark the result! He who passed no eulogy upon Cæsar for his bravery, or Hector for his valour, or Homer for his Iliad, said of this poor woman, "SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD." Said one, "I am not ambitious to have a rich mausoleum when I am dead, a stately sepulchre, or a beautiful urn, or a name engraven in brass or marble, but a little stone to cover me, with this epitaph,—‘HE HATH DONE WHAT HE COULD.’"

Private Prayer.

"PHILOSOPHY," said the good and great Richard Watson, "asks a reason for the offering of prayer, and, waiting for an answer, never prays at all. Religion hears that God will be inquired of by us, thankfully bends the knee, touches the golden sceptre, and bears away the blessing." An apology for prayer is neither needed nor attempted here, as we write for those who admit its adaptation to man's utter dependency, and perhaps who pray themselves. We ask no other reason for calling upon the name of the Lord, than the single command of our great Prophet: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." This is our authority, our argument,

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for private prayer ; sitting, as it does, like a jewel on the bosom of that all-perfect body of divinity, the Sermon on the Mount. Prayer is to be made in the house of God, at the family altar, and in the closet. Each of these lays claim to advantages peculiarly its own ; and perhaps it would be difficult to determine which would bear away the palm, if subjected to a rigid comparison.

With David, we have "loved the habitation of God's house," and freely confess a high admiration of his enthusiastic love to public prayer. We honour the man who can climb to the highest pinnacle of earth, and, having his eye armed with telescopic power by faith, can pierce the heavens, that upper world of glory, and gaze with intelligent and adoring rapture upon the magnitude, order, beauty, and lustre of the works of God's fingers ; but we honour him the more because, having had his desire to see God whetted like that of Bacon in Nature's temple, he can then descend its steps, that he may ascend the "hill of the Lord," and "*behold the beauty of the Lord*" as it shines forth from "*between the cherubim.*" 110

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As we have already shown, the family altar commands our high attachment, associated as it is with our dearest memories.*

The closet, however possesses its own high and separate claims; which for a moment we consider. There is its hallowed privacy. No eye but One can penetrate the walls of that Bethel: no ear but One can listen to those groans unutterable. The world, the outer world of noise and show, of pleasure, of fashion, of trade, of politics, is all excluded. Here is no war-cry, no parliamentary debate, no trading speculation: all are shut out. Here is no "hurrying strife," nor

"Noisy burst of selfish love,
Which swells the formal song!"

but, drawing around her a veil impenetrable to the world, the soul, like Moses with unshod foot, draws near to God, and there, prostrate, pays her profoundest adoration, confesses her most secret sins, pours forth the deepest feelings of a grateful heart in holy incense of

* See "Family Altar," p. 87.

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thanksgiving; and, having taken the Name which can alone prevail, adds petition to petition, and intercession to intercession, until the heavens are opened, and an answer of peace descends, with a flood of glory, to bless the worshipper. Men do not become giants all at once : ordinarily they must be trained for great and noble action. Go to the Senate, listen to that peerless amongst the Peers. How his eloquence fixes all eyes, fastens all ears; and, like an overwhelming torrent, carries conviction with him. Whence hath this man this power? Doubtless he is highly gifted by nature; but if you would find the secret of his success, you must follow him to his study, where he trains and disciplines his powers, and thence issues forth to take his lofty flights, and carry his important measures. So it is in the closet that the Christian gathers strength for the duties of the Christian life. Here the orators of the church prepare to declare the whole counsel of God; here the martyrs of the church prepare to bleed; and here the humble *child of God* is prepared to shine in all the

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walks of life, to fight all the battles of life, and to surmount all the difficulties of life. Coming out of his closet, he is like the sun when he goeth forth in his strength. For

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

Whence came thy mysterious name, O Israel, Prince of God? “At Peniel, where having forwarded [the women and the children, the flocks, the herds, and the camels, to appease Esau, I wrestled all night in secret.” Whence came thy heroism, O Daniel, by which thou didst brave the ferocity of lions? “In my chamber, whose lattice opened towards Jerusalem.” Ye confessors and martyrs, whence came your great power? With united breath they cry, “We entered our closet, and prayed to our Father, which seeth in secret; and we are rewarded openly.”

A closetless piety is a feeble piety. Like the Chinese foot, it is cramped and unnatural; like the painted flower, although ingenious and pretty, it is destitute of the freshness and fragrance of God's own handy-work. It is not

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the flower of God. A closetless piety is a very slender thing. It cannot see far, for its eye is dim; it cannot grasp tightly, for its hand is weak; it cannot speak much, for its voice is feeble; it cannot labour much, for its strength is small. This dwarfish thing does little for the church, or for the world, or for Christ; and when a church is made up of such dwarfs, what must be the influence, the efforts, the prospects of that church?

We do not presume to determine the number of times a Christian ought to retire within the sanctuary of the closet. We have read of a royal Monarch, who, amidst the multifarious and anxious engagements of a troubled kingdom, resolved thus: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice." And, as though this were not sufficient, on another occasion he forms the holy resolve: "Seven times a day will I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments." We have also read of a Prince President at the Court of Babylon, who, notwithstanding he was the object of Court in-

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trigue, envy, and malice, "went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God." Washington was accustomed to retire to the woods on all cases of emergency, to seek direction from God. A little Hottentot girl was seen very often to retire behind the bush: the Missionary asked her the reason; the reply was, "I go to pray, Sir." We ourselves recollect a sainted man, who is now with the "hundred and forty and four thousand," who was accustomed habitually, on rising from his meals, to retire to his chamber, that, after supplying the wants of the body, he might strengthen his soul with angels' food. While, therefore, we cannot determine the number of times this solemn duty should be observed, we venture to point to the above examples as worthy of imitation, and also to suggest the importance of *fixed times* for prayer. "Any time is no time." Want of system, and want of punctuality, not only produce confusion, but not unfrequently lead on to total neglect: the

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very rock on which we are anxious to throw a torch of flame.

“But how do you know that private prayer is neglected? The closet is sacred ground; and no one can enter it but its sole proprietor, except as a spy, or a busy-body in other men’s matters: you have no right to judge in this matter.” Dear reader, we feel some force in this objection; and deny that we have any desire to intrude into the sacred domain of private devotion, or to sit in judgment upon our brother. But if a feeble piety is a true index; if a neglected Sabbath, Bible, prayer-meeting, class-meeting, be any evidence of a neglected closet, such evidence abounds around us; and the ONE EYE, that has the right to penetrate the walls of all closets in the universe, witnesses an awful neglect of this appointed duty.

The first converts to the truth in Africa were exemplary for their punctuality and zeal in private devotion. They had no chambers to go to, but each had his separate spot in the *jungle*, where he was wont to commune with

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God. The several paths to these little Bethels became distinctly marked; and when any one of them began to decline in the ways of God, it soon became manifest to the others, and they would kindly remind him of his duty by saying, "Brother, de grass grow on your path yonder." We close this paper by affectionately asking the question, "Brother, does the grass grow on *thy* path?"

A Revival in the Church,

DESCRIBED AND ANTICIPATED.

A REVIVAL of religion. *Where shall we look for it?* It must be either human or Divine. Man can do much, but he cannot make a revival of religion. It must, therefore, be Divine. Hence the old Hebrew Prophet, who saw "the Holy One come from Paran," on hearing His voice, trembled, and cried, "O Lord, revive thy work!" Yes, it is the work of the Lord: it bears the divine finger-marks and foot-prints.

"*Mystery!*"—Say you, Mystery? If you walk amidst the works and wonders of creation, you everywhere see this mark inscribed with God's own finger,—upon the globe and the globule, on the ponderous orb, and the minutest grain. Do you turn to Providence? you are constrained to sing, with Cowper,—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

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Think of redemption ; and, as its sublime and glorious truths pass before you, you confess, " Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

This distinguishing mark of a work of God is stamped upon the revival of religion in a neighbourhood : in the agents employed, in the persons benefited, in the course it takes, in the means it favours. There may be some things in it irreconcilable with your sense of order. But will you deny its divinity on this account ?

" Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain ;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

Variety is a footprint of Deity. Amongst the myriads of stars that cluster over your head, or swim beneath your feet, try to discover two that are in all respects counterparts of *each other* ; and if you succeed, you will *astonish* all astronomers. Or search for two

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flowers exactly alike; and, finding them, you will surprise the botanist. Or, examine the features of the myriads of countenances around you, for the purpose of descrying a perfect duplicate of your own; and if success crown your effort, you will confound all philosophers. But perfect uniformity is not characteristic of the works of God. And in a revival there is endless diversity. There is Lydia, sitting by the river-side: it is the Sabbath-day, and the hour of prayer. The dew descends gently upon her heart, as upon the brow of Hermon. There is no storm nor tempest, but the dew of heaven is effectual. Lydia is converted. There is the jailer. He has examined the bolts and bars of his castle, gone his last round, and secured the prisoners. He is startled at midnight; the gates tremble, the chains rattle, the very foundations of the prison groan; alarm is depicted on all faces, and fear fills all hearts, save two. The jailer is won to Christ. There is the eunuch. He is returning from Jerusalem in his chariot. He is reading Isaiah. Philip joins himself to the chariot, is courteously invited

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into it, preaches Jesus, and the eunuch becomes a believer in Him. Then there is Saul of Tarsus, pouring forth floods of malice, as Etna or Vesuvius belches liquid flame. A light above meridian splendour blinds the eyes of his body, and opens the eyes of his soul; and with the light a voice,—“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?” And, lo! “Saul is among the Prophets.” Let not Lydia complain of the jailer, though he is more excited than she. Let not the jailer complain of Lydia, although she is more quiet. God is alike in the dew and in the earthquake, in Isaiha’s rapture and in the vision of Saul.

Benevolence, too, marks the works of God. “His tender mercies are over all His works.” You have seen the face of nature after a long drought. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth. The ground yawns beneath your feet. The air is red and fiery. The trees of the field are drooping, and the universal stillness is intolerable. But, lo! a cloud arises; then the drops descend, and finally the teeming shower; *and then the barren mountain puts on its green*

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mantle, "the valleys are covered over with corn," and the very "trees of the field clap their hands" for joy. So the church during a drought. There is no dew upon Hermon, nor upon Gilboa. The garden of the Lord is waste. The men of Zion look wistfully and complainingly at each other. The field of the church is barren, and its atmosphere, instead of being genial and fruitful, is dry and lurid. But, lo! waters break out "in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; and the parched ground" becomes "a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." Then does "the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose;" it blossoms abundantly, and rejoices "even with joy and singing." Then to the church is given the glory of Lebanon, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.

A revival is beneficial to society. Legislation, rightly directed, has relieved this kingdom of many burdens, while education has contributed to the happiness of the community; but a revival of religion does more than either the one or the other in promoting the general weal. It brings Lazarus out of the grave, and

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his restoration fills the family with joy. Our Marthas and Marys rejoice over Lazarus revived. The mists of infidelity are dispelled. The specious pretences of formalism are exploded. Intense worldliness becomes intenser spirituality. The frozen charities of the heart are thawed, and gush forth freely. Public attention, which before was devoted wholly to trade, commerce, and politics, to the detriment of religion, is now recalled, and directed to the momentous questions of eternity. Listen to Jonathan Edwards's account of a revival. "A great and earnest concern about the things of God ran through all parts of the town, and the noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder. All talk but of eternal things was laid aside. The conversation in all companies (unless so far as was necessary for the carrying on of worldly business) was wholly upon religion. The minds of the people were strangely taken off from the world; it was *treated as a thing of very little importance.*" "The town seemed *to be full of the presence of God.* It never was *so full of love and joy, nor yet of distress, as it*

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was then. Our public assemblies were beautiful." Surely "this is the finger of God."

A revival of religion, —*can we promote it?* Can such worms promote the work of Omnipotence? We answer, that they can. It was to the "son of man" that God said, "I have set thee a watchman to the house of Israel." The great commission was entrusted to men; and to men it was said, "Ye are the light of the world,—ye are the salt of the earth." There is a sense in which the salvation of our fellow-men is put into our hands. There is nothing strictly miraculous in a revival of religion, because it is in the order of Divine government. Within our reach are all the light, all the means, and all the power necessary to promote it; and we have only, by prayer and faith, to bring this light into the proper focus, and claim the power which will act on the means employed, and move the world.

Once again we ask, *Have we fostered a revival of religion?* Have we the true revival spirit which breathes in Habakkuk's prayer, moves Nehemiah's trowel, weeps in Jeremiah's

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plaint, lifts up its voice in John the Baptist's preaching; which was the source and the glory of the greatness of a Luther, a Wesley, a Bramwell, and a Smith? Without it, the sun's clearness, the moon's fairness, the terror of the bannered army, are wanting in the church. Without it, we are dwarfish, not gigantic; cowardly, not courageous; mean, not manly; fickle not firm; transient, not steady; powerless, not mighty. The chariot-wheels have been impeded by envy, strife, debate, covetousness, sloth, worldliness, cold formality, and worldly conformity. The spirit of the world has triumphed over the spirit of religion. While men debated, they thought less about the salvation of souls than about trade, commerce, politics, and the war. But is the arm of the Lord shortened, that it cannot save? Is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Just as well might we ask, Has Omnipotence ceased to be omnipotent, or Immutability become mutable? Ah, no? God can save, and waits to save. He *can hear, and He waits to hear.* He can be

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gracious, and He waits to be gracious. Then rejoice, ye dispirited Ministers! shout for joy, ye downcast lovers of Zion! for the Lord will turn back the captivity of Zion; Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

A voice has called us to revival-work. Thousands of sermons have been preached, and tens of thousands of prayers have ascended to heaven. The breath from the four winds is passing over the bones. "There is the sound of abundance of rain," and there shall be "showers of blessing."

The flame is just enkindled. Come and fan it! Christian merchants on the exchange, manufacturers in your mills, tradesmen in your shops, working men at the spindle, and the loom, and the plough, come and fan the flame! To win a soul is a nobler exploit than to win a victory on the battle-field, or to make a fortune in the shop, or to gain a name in the scientific or literary world. "He that winneth souls is wise." Come and fan the flame. Love to souls demands it, for they are perishing by thousands; love to Zion demands it, for

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she is languishing and humbled ; love to Christ demands it, that He may see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

And Christian patriotism pleads for it. Think of the land of your birth, the land of the Reformers, winking, bending, crouching to the murderers of your Riddleys and Latimers ; the land of Baxter, and Howe, and Stillingfleet, and Wesley, succumbing to infidelity ! Think of our colonies, and of our Missions. If Protestantism and England should quail before their enemies, what is to become of the world ? O, then, we say to every lover of souls, of Zion, of Christ, of his country, of the world, Come and fan the flame that is just now enkindled ; for in that flame lives the salvation of the church, and the salvation of the world. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." No ! no ! it cannot be in vain. We shall succeed. The world is Christ's. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea." "The Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents : the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, *all Kings shall fall*

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down before Him." What a glorious promise, and what a scene shall be unfolded in its fulfilment! When a Czar of Russia shall join hands with an Emperor of Austria, and when Prussia and France shall help to bring in the Sultan to the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to unseat the Pope, and when all the lesser Princes of Europe shall unite with our own Sovereign in doing homage to the "Prince of the Kings of the earth," then shall "all nations serve Him."

Your labour is not in vain. For "the word of the Lord liveth and abideth for ever." Lord Lindsay states that in the course of his wanderings in the pyramids of Egypt, he stumbled on a mummy proved by its hieroglyphics to be two thousand years old. In examining the mummy, he found in one of its closed hands a tuberous or bulbous root. He was interested in the question how long vegetable life could last; and he therefore took that tuberous root from the mummy's hand, planted it in a sunny soil, allowed the rains and dews of heaven to descend upon it, and in the course of a week,

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to his astonishment and joy, the root burst forth, and it soon bloomed into a beautiful dahlia. The word of the Lord liveth. It possesses a vitality surpassing that of vegetation. "The grass withereth;" but the word of the Lord abideth for ever." And the seed which has been sown broadcast, and fallen into thousands of hearts, only waits the meridian rays of God's favour and influence, and a glorious harvest will spring up. "The hatchet may cleave the iceberg, the sun only can melt it." "Paul may plant, Apollos water; God only can give the increase."

Once again, we repeat, your labour is **not** in vain. *Come and fan the flame.*

"There is a fount about to stream,
There is a light about to beam,
There is a warmth about to glow,
There is a flower about to blow;
There is a midnight darkness changing into grey:
Men of thought and men of action, CLEAR THE WAY.

"Aid the dawning, tongue and pen;
Aid it, hopes of pious men;
Aid it, paper; aid it, type:
Aid it, for the hour is ripe:
Our earnest vigour must not slacken into play:
Men of prayer and men of action, LEAD THE WAY."

“We’re Behind Time.”

A NEW YEAR’S MEDITATION.

“ All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage : when young indeed,
In full content, we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves ; and only wish,
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool ;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan.
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve,
In all the magnanimity of thought,
Resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.”

My study was on the second floor, the window of which overlooked the great western road which stretches from Exeter to Plymouth, through the beautiful scenery of South Devon. It was in the days of coaches that the event occurred of which we write. The steam whistle had not riven the air of those lovely valleys, nor had the steam-horse terrified the unfamiliar natives by his frightful snortings ; but coaches in gay colours, with crack whips, and gentle-

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manly-looking guards, which travelled at the rate of ten miles per hour, were the means of public transit offered to His Majesty's liege subjects in those days.

Like the steam-horses of more modern times, those old stages bore very significant names; amongst which were, I well remember, the "Estafette," the "Telegraph," and the "Nonpareil." This Nonpareil could boast of an amusing and clever guard, who, by the music of his key-bugle and his ready wit, made himself very agreeable to the passengers who patronized his coach, and also to the inhabitants of the towns and villages through which he made his daily passage. On one occasion the Nonpareil had halted on its journey for the change of horses, just opposite to my window; and I was attracted to it by the clatter attendant upon that operation. The horses were all fairly adjusted, the coachman had seated himself on his box, the leaders were pawing with their fore feet, as if impatient of delay; when, on a sudden, the guard ran out, and, eyeing his *watch*, suddenly exclaimed, "*We're behind*

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time! Make haste, gentlemen.” In an instant there was a rush to the seats; crack went the whip, the horses’ hoofs clattered, the wheels rumbled on the pavement, and the Nonpareil was soon out of sight and hearing. But for some time I stood riveted to the spot, as by some supernatural influence; and the words, “*We’re behind time,*” echoed on my ear long after the guard’s horn had melted away in the distance. “*Behind time.*” I felt as though I had been disturbed in a profound slumber by something very startling, and a number of persons and scenes rushed before my vision, in illustration of the guard’s rallying-word, “*Behind time.*”

A school-boy with his satchel passed, panting for breath, and sobbing at intervals; for he had been crying. He had lain too long in bed, and was too late for school. He was “*behind time.*”

I then saw a youth, pensive and sad, returning to his home which he had left in the morning joyously. I asked him the cause of his sorrow. He replied, “I have been to seek a

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lucrative situation, which ‘The Times’ paper announced this morning; but I was behind time at the office. Another had stepped in before me.”

Scarcely had he passed, when I espied amongst the crowd a man of respectable attire, who had reached the meridian of life’s day. His countenance bespoke intelligence and capacity to accomplish something great; but he was dissatisfied with the slow process of rising by degrees, and had been waiting in the expectation that some golden opportunity would open up, in which he might display *his* talents, and seize the coveted prize of distinction and honour. But it had never come; and he was “*behind time.*”

There was another man “*behind time,*” because he did not consider the rapidity of its flight. He took no account of it. It rushed on and on towards the ocean of eternity, but he marked it not. He was like the traveller in an express train, who is carried on with a velocity which prevents him from gathering a *correct idea* of the scenes through which he

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passes; and although trees, and hedges, and churches, and houses, and parks, and mansions, and all the other features of English scenery, have adorned the path of the modern traveller, he can give no account of them. So the inconsiderate man, who now attracted my attention, had passed through fifty years, of fifty-two Lord’s days and three hundred and thirteen working days each; but he could give, alas! no account of them.

My attention next fell on a man who was sauntering along the street with a perfect air of indifference; as though life passed smoothly with him. His countenance was good-natured enough, and he was well enough respected in his neighbourhood as a thorough easy-going man; but he had acquired the habit of putting off until to-morrow what might be done to-day. He has a letter to answer; but it can be done before post-time to-morrow. He has a bill to pay; but to-morrow will do just as well as to-day. There is a friend to call upon: but he can make the call on the morrow. And the habit has grown upon him until there is a

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whole pile of letters to answer, a whole file of bills unpaid, and a host of friends grieved through the neglect resulting rather from indolence than a cold heart. He is "*behind time.*"

I now beheld an artist seated in his studio. By his side was a broken statue. His countenance bespoke great consciousness of neglect and disappointment. He had laboured for years at a splendid painting, which he confidently anticipated would repay all his toil and skill; but when it was exhibited to the public eye, the vulgar taste rejected it. The hopes of anxious years were dashed; and now, unnerved, he is too disgusted to make another attempt. He is "*behind time.*"

Scarcely had I turned away from this object, than I saw the death-bed of one who for years had occupied a seat in the house of God. She had attended the ministry of God's house with marked regularity; knew the way of salvation in theory; had an undefinable pleasure in attending upon the ordinances of religion; and had contributed in support of religious institutions, as well as assisted in working out those

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important auxiliaries of the church. But she was not a member of the church, although she intended to be; nor had she ever repented of her sins, although she had often purposed to do so. Sickness seizes upon her, and death follows in its train. It is Sunday morning. The Minister has been preaching to his people. A messenger awaits him, with an earnest request to visit a hearer who is dying. He hastens to the room; but only just in time to hear her say, "O, Sir! you are too late! you are too late!" which meant that she herself was "*behind time.*"

"Don't tell me of to-morrow;
There is much to do to-day,
That never can be accomplish'd
If we throw the hours away.
Every moment has its duty:
Who the future can foretell?
Then why defer until to-morrow
What to-day can do as well?"

"Don't tell me of to-morrow!
If we look upon the past,
How much that we have left to do,
We cannot do at last!
To-day, it is the only time
For all in this frail earth:
It takes an age to form a life:
A moment gives it birth."

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